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ABSTRACT

Continuing education needs of the Latin American population are related to the need of Latin American countries for social and economic development. The source of continuing educaton needs is the area's differentiated socioeconomic development and cultural diversity. Some common features of Latin American educational systems, well known as persistent obstacles to the educational develolpment of the region, are inequality of educational opportunities, low entry and completion rates of schooling, high illiteracy and dropout rates, and low quality of education. These shortcomings are due to external factors (social stratification combined with an imbalance in educational opportunities between urban and rural areas, lack of money) and factors internal to schools (curriculum irrelevance, teachers' performance). Latin America is aware of its problems as shown by its educational policies. Two continuing education programs to meet specific needs of people are the Chilean project, "Parents and Children: an Educational Program for the Popular Family," and Brazil's MOBRAL (Brazilian Movement of Literacy). The continuing education needs in Latin America can be summarized as being the needs to clarify assumptions, to develop an indigenous educational theory, to specify sound policy goals, and to develop new teaching-learning methods. (YLB)

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CONTINUING EDUCATION NEEDS IN LATIN AMERICA

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CONTINUING EDUCATION NEEDS IN LATIN AMERICA

Clélia de Freitas Capanema

Let me declare that I am extremely honoured by the invitation to be here today sharing ideas and experiences on the subject of the Conference with Library and Information personnel. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the American Library Association (ALA) - and in a more personal manner the co-Chairs of the Conference, Dr. Brooke E. Sheldon and Dr. Elizabeth W. Stone - for providing me with this enriching experience.

I think our value position is clear. Because all of us here want educational development for the betterment of life world-wide, we came to this meeting full of goodwill and hope. In our search for clarifying concepts and in examining practices of continuing education we expect to help the human community to fullfil more effectively its expectations.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this first section I present my definition of continuing education needs in Latin America and the assumptions which frame my argument throughout the paper. In the second section I describe the broad context of Latin America's continuing education needs. I identify the most important factors, external and internal to schools, which hinder educational development in Latin America. The third section is concerned with how Latin America perceives its educational problems and which solutions are being attempted to solve them. The fourth section represents the core of this paper. It is an effort at synthesis. Continuing education needs in Latin America are summarised as being: the need to clarify assumptions, to develop an autochtonous educational theory, to specify sound policy goals and to develop new teaching-learning methods. I close the paper by suggesting that the greatest Latin American need is to find its identity.

The needs of Continuing Education in Latin America as a whole is too wide a subject to be dealt with in detail in one paper. I try to focus the topic by singling out one common feature of Latin American countries, amid the subcontinent's many natural and cultural differences, as a

reference point to discuss the theme: the need for Latin America to develop. Development calls for more education for all the people. On the basis of this common problem of development, it may be possible to identify some educational needs in that huge and diversified region - within the boundaries of a number of assumptions.

Assumptions

First, a nation's development means more than economic growth. GNP and per capita income indicators are signs of a nation's economic performance. These indicators measure, but do not help policy-makers to give direction to economic activities - giving direction presupposes choice of the most suitable means to reach the chosen goals and objectives. Thus development, besides being holistic as a process, is also teleological in concept. It is a purposeful endeavour whose target is man's well-being, the actualisation of mankind's potentialities and aspirations. Therefore development should be human-centered in concept; and endogenous and self-reliant in method. It is this view which was at the core of President Nyerere's message to the International Conference on Adult Education and Development, held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in June 1976: "Development is for Man, by Man and of Man."[1]

The second assumption is a worldwide recognition of education as a social good and a means as well as a product of development. As Thurow remarks: " However much they differ on other matters, the left, the center, and the right all affirm the central importance of education as a means of solving our social problems, especially poverty."[2]

The third assumption is that at the very core of development, seen as "for Man, by Man and of Man", is continuing education. It functions as the backbone of development in the sense that it provides people with the tools for full participation in their own development. To the extent that they develop themselves on a lifelong basis they will be increasingly able to participate in the social, economic, political and cultural changes within their communities, and of course education is itself one of these change processes.

Fourthly, following UNESCO, continuing education is taken as "the principle on which the over-all organisation of an [educational] system is founded"[3]. It is based on the right of every "individual to be in a position to keep learning throughout his life".[4]

Definition

The Continuing Education needs of the Latin American population are the needs of every adult at any stage of

understanding and learning. Adult education here is taken in the sense with which Paldao mentions it as an international consensus: the totality of organised processes of education, at any level, with any content and by any method, formal or non-formal. These are processes that are intended to replace or to prolong the initial education through schools or universities or vocational learning. These are processes by which the adults will develop their aptitudes, increase their knowledge and improve their technical or professional competencies or give to the latter a new orientation. This adult education is also meant to change adults' attitudes and behaviour for an integral enrichment of the individual as well as for his participation in a balanced and independent socio-economic and cultural development.[5]

Because the stage of a country's development generates specific educational needs, the aims and practices of continuing education will be different in Latin America from those in more developed areas, and from one region to another inside Latin America itself. Latin America has failed to provide for basic schooling on the universal scale which the developed countries have provided for decades. Latin America also has high dropout rates. Therefore continuing education must be concentrated on the rescue of millions of adults for whom educational systems failed to provide an adequate and timely education.

II. THE LATIN AMERICAN CONTEXT: THE SOURCE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION NEEDS

There are two main characteristics of Latin America which should be noted: its differentiated socioeconomic development and its cultural diversity. There are deep differences among and between nations in Latin America. Some countries are relatively developed, others are unequally developed, and others have parts still in a stage of backwardness. As Haya de la Torre said so expressively, in Latin America there are "...several time scales in the same space..."[6]. There coexist patterns of modern societies and the most precarious conditions of living marked by poverty and its regular outcomes such as low health standards and ignorance.

Within this broad context, I will identify some common features of Latin American educational systems well known as persistent shortcomings in the educational development of the region: inequality of educational opportunities, low entry and completion rates of schooling, high illiteracy and dropout rates, and low quality of education. These shortcomings are due to factors external as well as internal to schools. As external factors I will emphasize social stratification combined with an imbalance in educational opportunities between urban and rural areas, and lack of money. As internal factors I will indicate curricula irrelevance and teachers' performance.

External Factors

Social stratification leads the school systems to treat children differently. This is combined with an imbalance in educational opportunities between urban and rural areas. In Latin America education has gone to the elites in the urban areas. It is also true that the urban areas have been critical for governments. It is there that unemployment and underemployment generate conflicts, social tensions, street violence and social marginality. In education not only has it been easier for the administrators to build, equip and staff schools in the urban areas, the best qualified teachers quite understandably have preferred to be assigned to these areas.

The converse is also true: education has not gone to the rural poor. The blockages to educational development are the consequences of the problems which hinder general socioeconomic development. In rural areas, geographical and economic factors ensure that an isolated and scattered population faces extremely difficult problems of communication, transportation, job opportunities and health care etc..

Gimeno[7] rightly remarks that the highest illiteracy rates in Latin America refer to older people and those from rural areas. The correlation between illiteracy and the predominance of latifúndio is significant. Studies carried out by ECLA in 1975 indicated that, taking the region as a whole, 1% of the Latin American landlords owned 62% of the land, while 75% of landlords owned 4.5% of it. This land-ownership system prevents the majority of the peasants from owning a piece of land to cultivate and helps to prevent them from becoming independent, powerful, assertive and self-confident people.

World Bank and UNESCO data[8] show:

- in 12 Latin American coutries, 40% to 60% of women above 15 years of age in rural areas are illiterate;

- while in the urban areas 88% of schools are "complete schools" (i.e. schools offering 5 years of schooling) in rural areas complete schools are less than 35% of the total;

- the completion ratio of primary schools leavers is 51% in the urban areas against 22% in the rural areas.

In the rural areas a one-teacher school (i.e. a school with one, two or three grades taught by one teacher in the same classroom) is quite common. It is said that 100,000 schools of this kind exist in Latin America. In 1971 the percentage of one-teacher schools was above 80% in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Paraguay and Venezuela.[9]

In the second half of the 1960s in a group of 11 Latin American countries, the dropout rates in rural areas reached 46.9% in the first grade of primary school. Only 8% of the pupils enrolled in first grade managed to complete the 6th grade.[10]

According to the IX General Census of Brazil (IX Recenseamento Geral do Brasil), carried out in the last quarter of 1980, the Brazilian rural population decreased in the 1970-80 decade in absolute as well as in relative numbers. At the census, there were 38,670,000 rural inhabitants: 37.43% of the total Brazilian population. However the literacy rates still favour the urban areas, as TABLE ONE below shows:

TABLE ONE

LITERACY RATE IN BRAZIL

	15 YEAR OLD LITERATE POPULATION(%) (1980)		
RESIDENCE	Total	Men	Women
TOTAL	73.9	75.6	72.1
Urban	82.2	85.5	80.4
Rural	53.0	54.5	51.4

Source: IBGE. IX RECENSEAMENTO GERAL DO BRASIL. In Montello, Jessé: Depoimento ao Correio Braziliense ed. de 22 de outubro de 1981, Suplemento, p. 16 (Tabela 18).

The peasant exodus to the cities does not bring a better life. On the contrary. Peasants go to the cities unprepared for urban life thus creating or increasing the problems for the peripheral population, and enlarging the poverty belt around the big towns. Unemployment and underemployment are the outcomes of an economic system which has an excess of unqualified manpower combined with an incapacity to create new jobs. Neither the economic nor the school system have been able to solve these problems.

Latin America faces a lack of money to provide the formal school system with adequate school buildings and equipment. To this are added bad physical and environmental conditions of many of the existing schools and classrooms. As a consequence, Latin America has been incapable of providing universal basic education. The pupil-teacher ratio in schools is also rather poor.

The allocation of money for the three levels of education favours higher and secondary education, to the detriment of basic education. Once again the urban area and the privileged social segments are favoured. Higher education is not provided in rural areas. Secondary education seldom is. Pescador[11] pointed out that in Latin America, from 1964 to 1973, 13 out of 20 countries reduced their budget for primary education. That means a concentration of financial resources in favour of a smaller part of the population: higher education is 10 to 11 times more costly than primary education while its enrolment represents 15% to 21% of a school system's total enrolment.

For the Third World in general it was quite disappointing not to have met UNESCO's 1960 goal of providing primary school for all children up to 1975-80.

According to Gomez[12], during the 1980s, there will be 865 million illiterate adults in the developing areas of the world. By 1985 it is presumed that 376 million children and adolescents from 5 to 14 will be outside the school system: 56 million more than in 1970.

Paldao[13] indicates that Latin America and the Caribbean had in 1970 45.5 million illiterate people out of 162.1 million inhabitants who are 15 or more years of age.

According to UNESCO's 1970s illiteracy figures[14] the Latin American and Caribbean countries were ranked as follows:

1. Rates over 40% : Guatemala and Haiti.

2. Rates between 25% and 40% : Bolivia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.

3. Rates between 10% and 25% : Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.

4. Rates below 10% : Antigua, Argentina, Barbados, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

Internal Factors.

Along with their inability to offer educational opportunities to the whole school-age population, the formal schooling systems have been unable to reduce the dropout and repetition rate. In most Latin American countries half of the school population leave school before learning to read and to write. This is related to curricula irrelevance: school subjects are often unrelated to the specific cultural context, to the differentiated clientele as well as to worklife needs. The school systems have shown ineffectiveness, for instance, in dealing with language problems. A sharp example is the situation in some Spanish-speaking countries which have failed to provide for social and economic integration of the Indian populations. It is noteworthy that studies have shown that by and large when a teacher belongs to a sociocultural group different from that of his or her pupils he or she fails to play the important role of an intermediary between the two cultures. Obviously, the problem of dropout and repeaters is also related to teachers' qualifications as well as to pupils' malnutrition or bad health conditions.

This inequality of educational opportunities and ineffectiveness of the formal school systems have triggered the criticism that schools function as a sorting machine for the occupations of the world of production with its corresponding ascription of income and social status and prestige.

In most radical approaches, such as Paulo Freire's, criticism is offered of schools as banking institutions whose "...task is to organise a process which already occurs spontaneously, to 'fill' the students by making deposits of information which he (the educator) considers to constitute true knowledge.".[15]

A key question becomes: how relevant for the rural and poor urban people are the content, and how effective are the instructional methods, processes, materials, teachers' performance and the learning experiences which the schools are providing? Curricula are said to be irrelevant, uniform, repetitive, encyclopaedic, and having little to do with students' needs, interests, aptitudes and personal objectives and aspirations.

Paulo Freire is sharply critical on this matter when he says:

> And since men 'receive' the world as passive entities, education should make them more passive still, and adapt them to the world.
>
> The more completely the majority adapt to the purposes which the dominant minority prescribe for them (thereby depriving them of the right to their own purposes), the more easily the minority can continue to prescribe. The theory and practice of banking education serve this and quite efficiently. Verbalistic lessons, reading requirements, the methods for evaluating 'knowledge', the distance between the teacher and the taught, the criteria for promotion: everything in this ready-to-wear approach serves to obviate thinking.[16]

As far as teachers' performance is concerned it is commonly said that teachers are more liberal and progressive in politics than they are in pedagogy. It is suspected that most of them do not put into practice methods which appeal to the learners' creativity.

These internal factors as well as factors external to the schools help to explain the rather low profile of the

Latin American schooling systems, especially in rural and poor suburban areas. While these internal factors (curriculum matters, teachers' qualification, instructional materials and teaching techniques) should not be underestimated, the external factors, related to the cultural, socioeconomic and political reality of the communities, are very powerful. On the other hand, research also indicates the irreplaceable teachers' role in the learning process and that some classroom procedures are more effective than others for the students' success. Teachers make a difference.

By stating that teachers are an important part of the educational process I am probably touching the punctum dollens of the educational picture in Latin America, where the shortage of qualified teachers is a common denominator. That is why the Organisation of the American States (OAS) puts emphasis on the teachers' training program for the hemisphere.[17]

In this part of my talk, I have identified certain major persisting patterns of problems which are the context within which educational reforms in Latin American take place. These persisting patterns have been social stratification with inequality of educational opportunities in the urban setting, imbalance in educational opportunities between urban and rural areas, and lack of money (all factors external to schools). As internal factors I have indicated curricula irrelevance and teaching ineffectiveness. The outcomes of these patterns are illiteracy, high dropout and repetition rates.
Of course the list could be extended. For example, much educational effort in Latin America takes place in an external context which is characterised by bursts of political instability, and in an internal context of administrative centralisation of the educational services. But a universal listing of all aspects of context is not sensible in aspiration or even useful in practice. I have chosen to discuss those which are the most important. Let us now turn our attention to Latin American efforts, in the context I have described, to identify and to meet continuing education needs. Later in this paper I will turn to the issue of educational centralisation which is to be corrected by educational regionalisation.

III. LATIN AMERICA'S AWARENESS OF ITS EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Latin America is quite aware of its educational needs. The educational policies that the continent has established over the last 25 years are based upon diagnosis of the situation in each country as well as on the educational trends discussed in conferences at international, regional and national levels. These meetings have been the source and genesis of these trends.

The first of those significant events was the Regional Conference on Free and Compulsory Education in Latin America, held in Lima in 1956. It had the participation of top-level educational administrators, international agencies and specialists from different countries. The main concern of the participants was the relationship between educational backwardness and the economic development of the countries in the region.

The Santiago Conference (1962) assembled ministers of education and those responsible for economic planning. One of the Conference's recommendations was that:

> ...steps be taken ... to formulate educational development programs integrated with overall economic and social development plans which, without neglecting the all-round education of the human person, establish priorities for increasing the people's productivity so as to accelerate the economic and social advancement of the whole population.[18]

The Buenos Aires Conference (1966), among other conclusions, stressed the need for expansion of the school systems, improvement of the quality of education and the cultivation of attitudes favourable to the achievement of cultural and economic integration.

The Venezuela Conference (1971) advocated, among other initiatives, the coordination of school and out-of-school activities in the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Continuing Education

I indicated at the start of this paper that continuing education is to be firmly located within a concept of development. It is intended to provide people with knowledge, skills and attitudes to make them increasingly able to participate in their countries' changes. These two concepts - development and continuing education - were main concerns of the Mexico Conference (1976). The Conference spelled out (i) a concept of development (ii) broad emphases for educational policy until the year 2000 and, implicitly, (iii) a conception of continuing education with strong implications for practice in the years ahead. From them it is possible to outline in general terms the aims and patterns of practice of continuing education for the immediate future.

The Mexico Conference's definition of a developed nation is "...one whose people are well informed, cultured, efficient, productive, responsible and possess a sense of solidarity.".[19] Its declaration stressed:

- The important role education should play in a country's development process as well as in the building of a society of justice, equity, self-conscience, participation and solidarity.

- The utilisation of non-formal education as a complementary educational strategy.

- A closer relationship between the curricula and the concrete problems of community life in order to preserve the communities' cultural identity.

These objectives might be attained by:

- Providing education under the principle of equality of educational opportunities, giving to the underprivileged people a privileged treatment.

- Adapting the educational mechanisms to the local problem situation.

- Relating education and the world of work.

- Promoting rural education development.

- Educating the urban poor.

- Articulating school activities and the out-of school environment to allow for a program of democratic continuing education.

- Having higher education institutions committed to the proposed solutions of the educational problems.[20]

I mentioned earlier in this paper that much educational effort in Latin America takes place in an internal context of administrative centralisation of the educational services. Under the auspices of OAS the Member States are undertaking efforts to decentralise those services by means of educational regionalisation. This regionalisation means bringing the planning and the decision-making processes (related to personnel, financing and curricula) closer to the communities - where the problems are. Regionalisation means designing educational models which take into account regional characteristics (geographic, cultural, economic, and social). This regionalisation is intended to correct those regional disparities in Latin America.

For the purpose of establishing a policy for educational regionalisation OAS assembled the Ministers of Education of Member States for the XI Meeting of the Interamerican Council for Education, Science and Culture, held in Bogota, Colombia, in 1980. The recommendations of this meeting are spelled out in the document called Consenso de Bogotá sobre Regionalización Educativa a Nivel Nacional (Resolución CIECC 460/80 y 488/80). Briefly stated, the documents's recommendations for the regional educational problems called for:

- regionalisation of educational planning and administration;

- curricula flexibility geared to the regional cultural contexts;

- interchange of experiences and stimulation of the communities' participation in their own development.[21]

In this concern for cultural relevance Latin America is searching for an educational theory and practice to solve its specific problems.

As Sergio Nilo points out, many alternative educational models for culturally differentiated groups have been put into practice in Latin America - programs conceived for real people who have singular traits. He observes that educational programs should take into consideration:

- the existence of pre-literate cultures whose concept and valuation of written words are quite different from those of the literate cultures;

- the persistence of pre-colonial modes of social organisation still unknown to Western thinking;

- the persistence of specifc social and economic dynamics in the rural and urban poor peripheral areas;

- the existence of a different "logic" regulating the thinking of many groups;

- the existence of a "mental world" with a more total mode of thinking which cannot be submitted to the analytic/synthetic categorisation;

- a completely different hierarchy of the intellectual and emotional aspects of human behaviour because the sharp distinction we make is not drawn between them in some cultural groups;

- a different concept of the use of time by which one fills things up with time instead of filling time up with things, as Gonzalez puts it.[22]

Introducing some of those programs in an OAS publication[23], Roberto Etchepareborda emphasized that those programs show the enriching possibilities of combining education and culture to meet the real needs of a community. They are the right answer to a great challenge which is the need for different cultural groups being provided with a national culture without nevertheless losing their own cultural identity and authenticity. These ethnic differences in Latin America need research from different disciplinary fields such as psychology of learning, logic, social psychology and cultural anthropology. All Latin American countries are developing some kind of educational projects as alternative strategies in order to meet educational needs of a differentiated clientele.

A comprehensive account of continuing education actions in progress in Latin America is not possible within the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, some examples of alternative programs meant to meet the specific needs of people might show the coherence between aims and practices in Latin American education.[24]

Practices: Chile.

The Chilean project Parents and Children: an educational program for the popular family (PPH) is a

typical example of an alternative educational model, among many similar ones, in Latin America.

The rationale for the project is the need for upgrading the level of education of poor urban and rural parents. The expected results are improvements in parents' understanding of their young children's development process and consequently providing them with a more stimulating environment. The participants (parents) are encouraged to think of their own reality in order to be able to face their communities' problems and needs. Their vital experiences are valued and their creativity is stimulated.

The program operates through the parents (adult education) aiming to enable them to learn about their children's development as well as to identify their communities' needs. It is based on the psychosocial method and has Paulo Freire's work as an inspiration. Therefore adult education is practised through participation for understanding and transformation of the environment. It is intended to oppose the "banking" concept of education denounced by Paulo Freire, mentioned earlier in this paper.

The operationalisation. Participants: 25 to 30 persons - parents or older brothers and sisters - and a coordinator. Premises: any community organisation available. Duration: the groups assemble once a week for one year. Content: the content is developed by units of problem-themes towards (a) thinking of the reality that affects the group; (b) identifying specific problems and their causes; (c) evaluating the consequences if the problem is not faced in time; and (d) proposing solutions. Some of those themes are child development, the relationship between parents and children, sexual education and nutrition. Roles: the coordinator helps the group to identify problems. He or she does not deliver lectures. He or she creates situations for discussion. The participants bring their knowledge and experiences and learn from each other. They come to participate, not to listen passively. They come to find solutions for their problems. They do not receive ready solutions (recipies) to adopt. Steps: (a) motivation and problematisation; (b) deepening and objetivating the problem; (c) action.

Parents meet with teachers to discuss problems of development of children 4 to 6 years old. Based upon Piaget's theory of child's development, parents learn to plan and to develop activities with their children at home.

The implementation. The project had a pilot phase: the training of coordinators, in 1974-75, in the rural sectors called San Felipe and Laly-Llay. The second phase was experimental for the whole project. It was developed in Trapicha (1976-77) as well as with a population of Santiago

Los Copihues (1976). From that date the project began to be diffused. It has already reached 36 rural centres (Coihueco, Chillais and Curico) and 50 urban centres (Santiago), 50 communities in Osorno and 20 in Linares. Those centres are linked to Church organisations which work with poor communities.

The evaluation. Some results have already been detected. A first evaluation of the effects of the project on preschool children shows an increase in their intellectual development (7 points in the I.Q. index). Also, there is no significant difference between the intellectual development of the children who attended kindergartens and those who did not but had their parents participating in the PPH project. It has been noted that the children reached by the PPH showed more openness and self-expression, an ablility to talk in front of adults. It has been found that the fathers (not only the mothers) are now performing an educative role at home. They are playing with their young children. The fathers are also more interested in their own education. Some, who were illiterate, asked for literacy training. Many adults feel more able to communicate, and are valuing their own experiences and knowledge. They gained self-confidence. A woman, who never before had dared to speak in public, managed to talk to the mayor of the town on behalf of the community. These communities are experiencing changes. The relationship between neighbours has improved. People are learning how to organise themselves to face their problems.

Practices: Brazil.

The next example - MOBRAL (Brazilian Movement of Literacy)[25] - is of a different kind. It is a governmental institution. It was established by the Brazilian Government in 1967. By law it has given a longterm priority status to literacy work based upon the continuing education principle. Within this life-long conceptual frame, after literacy training, the trainees can go to primary education, to community development programs and/or vocational training. There is also an open line to secondary education outside MOBRAL.

Despite a difference in the view of the political and economic function of literacy programs, there is some similarity between MOBRAL's educational procedures and those proposed by Paulo Freire.[26]

The MOBRAL model goes beyond literacy training, despite its name. Its techniques are said to be based upon the belief that man, even illiterate and in a state of deprivation can handle his own learning process. Philosophically, its method is defined from an existentialist point of view: it considers the individual

and his situation in the world as a dialoguing being in a constant process of development. Education is essential to the process of human promotion. To attain it, man should be the subject as well as the object of his educational process.

MOBRAL now rejects the principles and teaching methods which limit educational practices to the training of manpower. Its self-explanation also refers to its original objective. It was first conceived to offer basic education to the poor segment of Brazilian society so that the quality of life and work conditions of the poor would be improved. Eventually it would provide for social participation and integration.

MOBRAL is concerned with the priority educational needs of man, with the understanding of the community's cultural universe aimimg at making its programs culturally meaningful to each community. Its method, from a fresh focus, is based on learners' participation. It is labelled active, dialectical and critical. MOBRAL is using flexible alternative models in order to meet the diversified needs of the communities. These models, implemented on a nation-wide basis, have different emphases. They can be educational, cultural, leisure and work-oriented, and can provide health education and subsistence skills training.

Two features are said to have helped the process of implementation: (a) community mobilisation - which means community commitment to the aims and practices of MOBRAL - local initiatives and the formation of commune committees; (b) a global supervision system at three levels: state, area and municipal, operating in a decentralized way but interrelated by a net of communication.

The programs. After 1970, MOBRAL launched the following programs: Functional Literacy, Integrated Education, Cultural Activities, Vocational Training ("Professionalisation"), Self-teaching, Health Community Education, Sports for All, Scarcity Technology, Consumer Education. These programs cannot be considered in isolation because of MOBRAL's continuing education focus. They are intended to be part of a broad system of continuing education addressed to the whole community.

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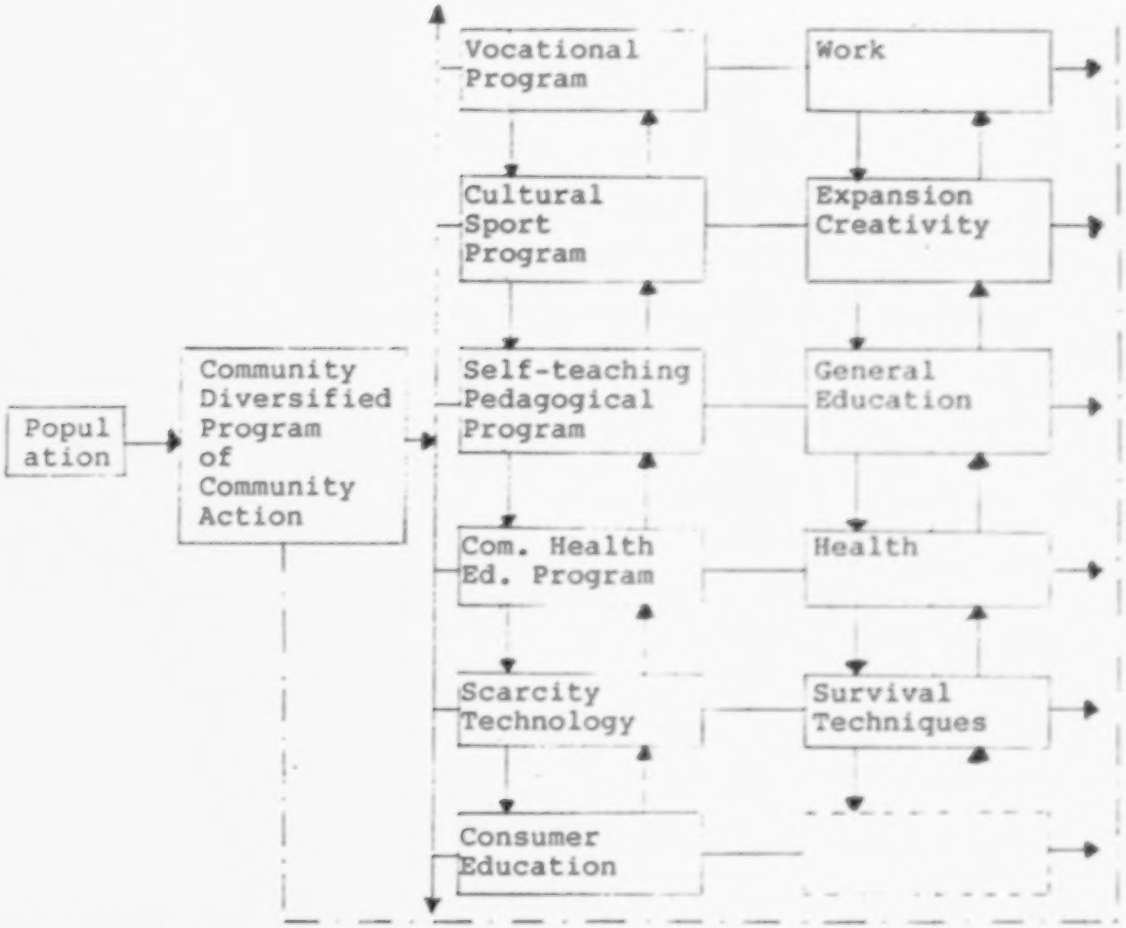
TABLE TWO shows the range and nature of the MOBRAL's concept and practices of continuing education.

TABLE TWO

CONTINUING EDUCATION SYSTEM



Source: MOBRAL.Experiencias de Educación de Adultos. In Carlos Alberto Torres (Coordinador). Ensayos sobre la Educación de los Adultos en América Latina. Mexico: Centro de Estudios Educativos A.C., 1982, p.491.

The educational, cultural, work-oriented and community-centred programs have their own particular objectives,

format, content and techniques but are all based upon cultural action.

The Functional Literacy Program[27] is a mass program to be operated in the huge and diversified country which is Brazil. MOBRAL had to face a dilemma: what should be centralized to facilitate administration and financing and what should be decentralized to meet communities' specific needs and cultural peculiarities. Instructional materials for instance had to meet both requirements. The decentralized operation of the programs makes it possible to adjust them to local features. Currently MOBRAL sponsors literacy programs by televison for urban people (domestic servants, workers in civil construction, inmates, in-hospital patients) and by radio for those in the rural areas. The conventional mode is also in operation: teacher-learner-printed material. It is imparted together with education for worklife and health education. Through this program, by 1979, 13,532,363 persons have become literate.

The Integrated Education Program is a 12-month compact primary education which follows the literacy program. It is operated through agreements signed with the State and Municipal Secretaries of Education as well as with a variety of non-profit private institutions. MOBRAL provides for instructional materials and technical assistance. The counterparts provide for human and material resources, follow up and evaluation. By 1971, 3,960,062 people had completed this integrated education.

The Self-teaching Program was conceived on the principle that education is a process through which an individual learns how to learn thus eventually becoming the agent of his or her own education. The Cultural Posts are the operational units for this program. These posts are intended to be an agency of continuing education. The program is addressed to the MOBRAL teachers, the MOBRAL neo-literates, the population already engaged in the educational process, especially the poor. In the second half of the seventies, there were 283,708 persons involved in this program.

The Cultural Program is based on the following principles: (a) democratisation of culture; (b) making creativity and cultural interchange dynamic; (c) valuing the human being and the local culture; (d) preservation of culture. It is a flexible and decentralized program which is to be adjusted to the community's needs, interests, and cultural peculiarities. The practical implementation of the program uses a variety of techniques. For example, the "Cultural Post" is a reading, information, and consultation center, provided with books, magazines, periodicals, maps, radio, audio-visual equipment etc. There are 3,150 posts of this kind all over the country. The "MOBRALTECA" is a

mobile unit fixed on a truck to carry books and other materials. It is convertible to serve as stage, movie-screen, art exhibition etc. There are 6 units of this kind which already reached 1,827 localities.

More than 800,000 people have benefitted from the Vocational Training (Professionalisation) program: 601 job centers found jobs for 113,904 candidates. This vocational training is operated by agreements with a wide range of enterprises, firms and institutions, public and private, religious and lay. The Diversified Community Action Program (PRODAC) and Health Community Education Program (PES) mobilize the communities for awareness of and search for endogenous solutions to their problems - cultural, economic, educational, health needs etc.. Other programs include the Sports for All Program which was developed under the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Culture. It aimed at stimulating people to practice sports in order to improve health conditions. 2,600,000 people participated in this program. The Scarcity Technology program is aimed at helping rural and peripheral urban people to develop popular techniques such as food production, husbandry, house building, health care, agriculture etc.. The Education of the Consumer program prepares people for living with the energy crisis. As well as avoiding wastage of resources the population will need to learn new ways of living: how to make better use of residuals and leftovers; to explore the potentials of new raw materials. This program is broadcast by radio and television.

The Results. There has been an impact on the lives of the participants, especially through the literacy programs. Studies show relative social and occupational mobility, a greater participation in community political and cultural life, and an improvement of the self-image when the participant overcomes the illiteracy stigma.

Among material results are a number of small newspapers edited in the cultural posts, the listing of local craftsmen, the existence of folklore groups, and choirs and drama groups in those posts. More than 100,000 vegetable gardens have been built. Thousands of houses have been built or restored and sanitation improved.

MOBRAL perceives itself as a vehicle of popular culture. It measures its success by community participation and the development of respect for the culture of communities; by innovation in teaching practices; by modern administrative practices; by the adoption of mass education strategies; by the development of trial and error attitudes, and of the idea of continuing education and the expansion of this concept to that of omnipresent education.

Perspectives: 1980-1985. The MOBRAL Foundation goal is to deliver educational services to the peripheral sectors of Brazilian society. Human promotion and participation are the key words in the guiding principles of action. The preferred model is community education. The first priority is the functional literacy program as the starting point of continuing education and the motivation for mobilising the small Brazilian communities. The other programs will follow the guidelines of the Ministry of Education:

(1) Linking to the local culture.

(2) Basic education through integrated education, vocational training, health education, cultural actions, leisure activities and development of survival techniques.

(3) Integration of formal and non-formal models of education, more specifically at preschool and primary school levels.

(4) Establishment of closer relationship between community action programs and institutions dedicated to non-formal education.

(5) Designing of educational models for adolescents and adults adjusted to the reality of rural and poor suburban areas. The idea is to provide opportunities for access to higher levels of education such as the program of integrated education and the self-teaching program.

Accordingly, MOBRAL will continue investing resources in improving the training of personnel involved in non-formal adult education. MOBRAL hopes and plans to have more 2,400,000 learners reached by the functional literacy programs by 1985.

IV. NEEDS: A SYNTHESIS

In the light of the limits I imposed on this paper (part I) and the general picture of Latin America's educational problems and its awareness of them (parts II and III), I will now summarise the continent's continuing education needs.

There is a need for: clear assumptions, renegotiation of educational theory, clarity of policy goals and the development of new teaching-learning methods. I will deal with each of these in turn.

1. Need for clear assumptions

I take as axiomatic the traits of a developed nation as the Mexico Conference understood it - "one whose people are well informed, cultured, efficient, productive, responsible, and possess a sense of solidarity" - in order to frame models of educational services to exercise the continuing education principle.

I take as axiomatic that continuing education should be designed to provide knowledge, skills and values to fit into that picture, such as curiosity, discovery, good judgement, critical thinking, self-expression, participation, initiative, decision-making, commitment, solidarity, self-assertiveness, integration, self-actualisation.

I take as axiomatic that the actual content should include literacy and post-literacy services, understanding of the physical, social, political and cultural environment, education for full participation in the community and in working life, education for leisure and for living in the 21st century.

I take as axiomatic that continuing education should substitute for formal education for those denied it; complement formal education thus performing other tasks not performed by formal education; extend formal education and maximize its usefulness.

I accept that it is the size of the educational task in Latin America which has led to the search for alternatives to schools. Non-formal education models are being favoured due to their flexibility in imparting skills and knowledge besides greater responsiveness in adjusting to changing needs and distributing educational opportunities more equitably.

2. Need for a theory.

There is a felt need and a corresponding search for a theory that matches the Latin American adults' human reality. Until recently, most educational analyses in Latin America were based upon European and North American thinking. The historical, economic, social, political and cultural circumstances of Latin America are leading Latin American educators and social scientists to link education to social change and political consciousness. Outstanding are the work initiated by Paulo Freire and the adult education activities of Roman Catholic agencies aiming at liberation of the underprivileged Latin Americans from ignorance, alienation and subordination. Education for freedom and liberation, designed to meet the specific needs of real people can be said to be the main theoretical

feature of Latin American adult education nowadays. I would say that Latin America has become more introspective and self-analytic. Except for a few radical thinkers, it is not being xenophobic; but it is trying to create an endogenous and autochthonous scientific explanation for its reality.

In that direction there is a need for involving the higher educational and research institutions in systematic graduate and undergraduate studies on the philosophical, psychological, sociological, anthropological, economic and political foundations of adult education as a lifelong activity for human and national development.

3. Need for policy goals

I base my policy recommendations around my analysis of the perennial problems of high illiteracy, dropout and retention rates, due to social stratification, imbalance between rural and urban areas as far as educational opportunities are concerned, lack of money, curricula irrelevance and teaching performance.

First of all, there is a need for a deliberate planning of continuing education for social change. It would be naive to believe that this policy could be isolated from a broader change strategy. Of course, a policy of that kind will vary from one nation to another. It demands the exercise of democratic political will, a free debate on the political, social and economic issues.[28]

Some examples of this democractic political will would be affirmative actions giving preferential consideration to the problems of the rural and peripheral poor populations and ethnic minorities, so privileging the underprivileged. This policy would intend to slow down the pace of the exodus from the rural to the urban areas by means of a true rural development. At the same time it would intend to upgrade the professional skills and quality of life of the latecomer urban population.

It is a truism to state that it would be naive to think of education as a force in the social and economic development process isolated from other forces with which it is expected to interact. That is why La Belle[29] was cautious in his assessment of some Latin American non-formal education programs. While a little bit disappointed with the results of these programs, he rightly remarks that education has a contribution to give to the solution of social problems and issues. However, it must be seen, instead of a panacea, as a minor component of the whole process.

As an instrument of political will, a financing policy for continuing education is deeply needed. The spiral

inflation and conditions of the economy in general in most Latin American countries call for indigenous modes of maximising the scarce financial resources for education.

This policy should contemplate the supporting of the existing formal system of schooling for the young generation and at the same time the allocation of resources for a non-formal structure in a comprehensive manner to reach millions of neglected adults.

4. Need for the development of teaching-learning methods

Despite the considerable amount of knowledge already available and some successful experiments on adult learning patterns there is a need for further investigation of contents, techniques and materials of adult education. Latin American educators need to familiarize themselves with the principles and patterns of practice of what Knowles labelled andragogy.

The higher education and research institutions in Latin America should intensify work on a theory of adult learning and its corresponding educational technology. The elements of this educational technolgy are: curricula, methods and techniques, instructional materials and aids, as well as evaluation. This technolgy must be adjusted to each country's reality needs, and potentialities. Accordingly, this technology will be of different levels ranging from sophistication to the simplicity of crafts.[30]

It is apparent that sophisticated technology is beyond the means of most Latin American communities. This consideration brings us to the role library and information technology is already playing in those contexts. Adjusted to the local conditions, there is a rather wide range of services which can be offered by library and information personnel. They are already providing rural and poor urban communities with materials in support of literacy programs. Libraries are becoming community cultural centres designed to promote community development. Schemes like mobile library trucks or vans visiting rural areas have proved to be suitable to the Latin American context which I have described in this paper. It is forseeable that library and information science personnel will become increasingly involved in the search for indigenous ways of optimizing their potentialities in developing settings.

Efforts should be concentrated on the investigation of the needs, interests, learning styles, beliefs, values, and attitudes of the target populations which are culturally diffentiated groups. This concern might generate an endogenous technology of continuing education.

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper I have noted as a common denominator among Latin American countries the need for social and economic development. I assumed that development should be human-centered - more than mere economic growth and that continuing education is a principle on which the over-all organisation of an educational system in most of Latin America should be founded. The blockages to this educational development in Latin America include social stratification, imbalance between urban and rural areas, lack of money, curricula irrelevance and teaching performance. The persistent shortcomings in the educational effort in Latin America are revealed by the high illiteracy, dropout and repeater rates.

I have suggested that Latin America is aware of its problems as many of its educational policies show and I have tried to outline the detailed work of two continuing education programs in Latin America. Difficulties still remain, in particular, the need for clear assumptions and for the renegotiation of educational theory, policy goals and new teaching-learning methods.

These needs suggest that a major and comprehensive need in Latin America is finding its own identity, a point which has been picked up by Juan Gomez Millas in his comment on the Latin American educational systems:

> A partir de los fines de la década del 50, la esperanza puesta en este desarrollismo comienza a esfumarse frente a una cruda realidad de estancamiento, la aparición de una conciencia que hace que la brecha que separa los imitadores de los imitados, en vez de estrecharse, se amplia exponencialmente. Paralelamente, surge en diversas regiones de América Latina una estrategia en búsqueda de la originalidad y se plantea el problema de su propria identidad regional y nacional. ¿Si la economia avanza con lentitud en que otra cosa podremos avanzar? ¿Que somos? Para donde podremos ir? ¿Cuales son los valores cuya vigencia nos pueden dar eficiencia y personalidad en el mundo? ¿Cuales son los caracteres típicos de este mundo latinoamericano? Que debemos hacer para llegar a tener esos valores? ¿Es que se nos apreciara por lo que imitamos o copiamos, o por aquello que sea autenticamente nuestro aunque no sea excelente? Lo que interesará al resto del mundo será lo que

sea típico, auténtico, que represente lo que realmente somos y de que manera lo somos.[31]

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Robert Cowen (Senior Lecturer in Comparative Education at the University of London Institute of Education) and Mrs. Maria C. M. de Figueiredo-Cowen for their assistance and comments at various stages of this paper. Responsibility for errors and conceptual inadequacies remain mine alone.

1. President Nyerere's statement was unanimously adopted as the Declaration of Dar-es-Salaam. See J. R. Kidd. "An Urgency: Adult Education in and for Development". In Hall and Kidd (eds.). Adult learning for action. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1978, p. 3.

2. Lester C. Thurow. "Education and economic equality". In Karabel, Jerome & Halsey, A. H. (eds.). Power and ideology in education. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 325.

In this article, Thurow discusses various theories on the relationship of education and the economic system, more specifically, the wage policies. He himself does not rely on education for "curing all problems, economic and social".

3. Edgar Faure et al. Learning to be. Paris: UNESCO, 1972, p. 182.

4. Op. cit., p. 181.

5. Carlos E. Paldao. Alfabetizacion y otras formas de la educación de adultos: algunas notas para su estudio. La educación, No. 92, Año XXVII. Washington, D.C.: O.E.A., 1983, p. 24.

6. See José Blat Gimeno. Education in Latin America and the Caribbean: trends and prospects, 1970-2000. (Regional Conference of Ministries of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning of Member States in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized by Unesco, Mexico City, 1979) Paris: UNESCO, 1983, p. 18.

Gimeno recalls Haya de la Torres' well-known statement when he pictures the cultural diversities in Latin America.

7. Gimeno, op. cit., p. 93.

8. See Victor Manuel Gomez. Expansion, crisis y prospectiva de la educacion in la America Latina. El Trimestre Economico. Mexico, 48 (189): 121-155, mar. 1981, p. 124.

9. Gimeno, op. cit., p. 93.

10. Gimeno, op. cit., p. 94.

11. Gomez, op. cit.

12. Ibidem.

13. Paldao, op. cit., p. 25.

14. See Gimeno, op. cit., p. 97.

15. Paulo Freire. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. London: Sheed and Ward, 1972, p. 62.

16. Op. cit., p. 62-3.

17. The OAS concern with teacher training is indicated in many documents of that Organisation. See Victor M. Valle. La capacitacion de docentes como prioridad de los sistemas educativos de America Latina y el Caribe. La educacion. Revista Interamericana de Desarrollo Educativo. No. 93, Ano XXVII, Washington D.C.: OEA, 1983, p. 83-91.

18. Gimeno, op. cit., p. 27.

19. Gimeno, op. cit., p. 102.

20. See Gimeno, op. cit. for the main line of emphasis of the Mexico Conference, Part Three, p. 101-87.

21. Conceptual framework for educational regionalisation in Latin America, the account of the XI Meeting held in Bogota in 1980 as well as reports on experiences already on the way in Argentina, Brazil and Colombia can be found in La educacion, Revista Interamericana de Desarrollo Educativo. Washington D.C.: OEA, (87) Ano XXV, 1981. Account of experience in Chile, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Venezuela: La educacion. Revista Interamericana de Desarrollo Educativo. Washington D.C.: OEA, (88) Ano XXVI, 1982.

22. Sergio V. Nilo. Introduccion. In Alternativas de educacion para grupos culturales diferenciados. Washington D.C.: OEA, 1983, p. 140.

23. Roberto Etchepareborda. Advertencia. In Alternativas de educacion para grupos culturales diferenciados. Washington D.C.: OEA, 1983, p. i.

24. For a complete description of some up-to-date programs, see Alternativas de educación para grupos culturales diferenciados. Washington D.C.: OEA, 1983. Some of these programs are: El Programa Bosconia La Florida ; Una Obra Educativa para Muchachos Callejeros en Bogotá, Colómbia; Programa de Educación de Adultos Syni Ruay, de Bolívia; Los Centros Infantiles Campesinos (Guagua-Huasis) de Ecuador; El Proyecto Educativo de los Grupos Etnicos de Mexico: La Educación Indígena Bilingue Cultural; Programa Padres y Hijos (PPH) de Chile. This description of the Chilean - PPH was based on CIDE - El Proyecto Padres e Hijos. In Carlos Alberto Torres (Coordinador). Ensayos sobre la educación de los adultos en América Latina. Mexico, p. 543-53.

25. This description is based on: (a) MOBRAL. Aspectos pedagógicos da la educacion de adultos de MOBRAL. In Carlos Alberto Torres (Coordinador). Ensayos sobre la educación de los adultos en América Latina. Mexico, Centro de Estudios Educativos, A.C., 1982, p. 379-97.
(b) MOBRAL. Experiencias de educación de adultos. In Carlos Alberto Torres (Coordinador). Ensayos sobre la educación de los adultos en América Latina. Mexico: Centro de Estudios Educativos, A.C., 1982, p. 493-500.

26. MOBRAL. For a critical analysis of these differences and similarities, see Barbara Freitag. Escola, estado e sociedade. São Paulo: Cortez & Moraes, 1979, especially p. 89-91. She argues that because it has a different philosophical outlook of the role of education MOBRAL should not use Paulo Freire's method and techniques.

27. For technical details of the functional literacy program see the description by MOBRAL in Carlos Alberto Torres, op. cit..

28. Tom Schuller and Jarl Bengtsson contend that "...educational change is held to be possible as a result of deliberate planning, the outcome of a free debate, and the exercise of democratic political will". A Strategy for Equity: Recurrent Education and Industrial Democracy. In Karabel, Jerome & Halsey, A. H. (eds.). Power and ideology in education. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 635. The authors suggest the need to relate education to other policies as well as to rethink its structures as a means to eradicate its weaknesses.

29. Thomas La Belle. Nonformal education and social change in Latin America. Los Angeles: UCLA, Latin American Center, 1976, p. 3-4.

30. Cesar Picón Espinoza. "La educación en America Latina en la década de los ochenta: situación y perspectivas". In Ensayos sobre la educación de los adultos en América Latina.

Carlos Alberto Torres (Coordinador). Mexico: Centro de Estudios Educativos A.C., 1982, p. 338.

31. Juan Gomez Millas. Perspectivas de la educación en America Latina. Washington, D.C.: OEA, 1979. Cited by Sergio Nilo in "Responsabilidades de la planificación y la cultura popular y la educación". La educación. Washington D.C.: OEA, (84) Año XXIV, 1980, p. 74. "From the late fifties onwards, the hope put in this developmentism starts to fade as a result of a crude stagnant reality, the emerging of a consciousness which makes the gap separating imitators from imitated grow enormously instead of narrowing. Similarly, a strategy in search of originality emerges in different regions of Latin America, and the problem of its own regional and national identity is raised. If the economy goes forward slowly, in which other area can we go forward? What are we? Where can we go to? What are the values whose existence can give us efficiency and personality in the world? What are the typical characteristics of the Latin American world? What shall we do to acquire those values? Will we be liked for what we imitate or copy, or for what is authentically ours, even if not excellent? What will interest the world is what is typical, authentic, representing what we really are and in what way we are."